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“RIGHT OF THE SOLDIER TO
ABSOLUTION.”

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

REV. R. SUFFIELD AND MR. URQUHART.

[NOT PUBLISHED.]

[*Printed for circulation among those to whom has been distributed*
Father SUFFIELD'S Letter to Lord DENBIGH.]

"Right of the Soldier to Absolution."

No. I.

D. URQUHART, ESQ., TO THE REV. R. SUFFIELD.

Châlet des Melèzes, St. Gervais, Haute Savoie,
June 22, 1869.

SIR,—I have written, or am writing, an answer to your letter to Lord DENBIGH, the receipt of which I have to acknowledge and thank you for. But it has extended to a good many, too many, pages; so that being without the means of copying, I must beg of your indulgence to accept it in print as soon as it is ready, which implies my receiving and returning a proof.

I have in it called on you to publish your letter. This request need not be delayed. Should you not think fit to grant it, I am then disposed to make to you the request for a supply of copies to transmit with my answer, and for the list of those to whom your letter has been sent, that my answer may be sent also. If copies are wanting, I will gladly undertake a reprint.

Translations are now making into French. They will have to be printed to accompany my reply in that language. I suppose that you will have no objection to this?

I think our mutual position in regard to the gravest matter that can occupy the human understanding warrants me in taking the liberty which I now take in addressing you thus abruptly and in reference to details of such a nature, and which have regard to a contest which I am thankful to you for engaging in.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,
Your very obedient and humble servant,
D. URQUHART.

The Rev. R. Suffield.

No. II.

THE REV. R. SUFFIELD TO D. URQUHART, ESQ.

The Hermitage, H. Bosworth, Leicestershire,
June 27, 1869.

DEAR SIR,—Last night I returned from Northumberland and found your kind letter.

For several reasons, it would not be desirable to publish my letter to Lord DENBIGH; it is incomplete, appeals to authority and not to argument, and is interwoven with allusions to private communications. The letter is quite at your command to print, as you propose, along with your own (*as not published*).

I shall be glad to be enabled to send copies of your letter to those whom I have known to be interested in this important subject.

I have the honour to remain, dear Sir,
Your obedient servant,
F. R. RUDOLPH SUFFIELD, O.S.D.

David Urquhart, Esq.

P.S.—This note could be printed also, if you deem well.

No. III.

D. URQUHART, ESQ., TO THE REV. R. SUFFIELD.

Châlet des Melèzes, St. Gervais, July 3, 1869.

DEAR SIR,—Since the day when my private note was written to you, which was, I think, the 23rd of last month, I have been incapacitated for all work, even the slightest, so that my public letter to you has remained untouched. It may have to remain so longer, for though after a good night I am able to write you these lines, it is only because they will have to treat only of a single point—the refusal which your note contains to publish your letter to Lord DENBIGH.

I commence by saying that, for myself, I accept that refusal, coupled as it is with the permission to use your letter with mine in an analogous manner. What I am about to offer is, therefore, deferentially submitted for your own consideration.

A case presenting enough of similarity to the present, to permit of its being adduced in illustration, has already occurred with a member of the Church of England. In that Church one Ecclesiastic also has been found to justify the acts which form the subject-matter of our controversy, and consequently to place himself in direct opposition in *terms* to my endeavours. A correspondence, as in the present case, ensued, and also, as in the present case, there was a refusal to allow of publication, with this difference, that the Prelate in question (the Bishop of OXFORD) inscribed the words "Private and Confidential" on his letters to me, out of which arose an impediment in my course, because of peculiarities in the legal course of procedure in England, which I imagine not to exist in reference to the Catholic Church.

I have directed a copy of so much of that correspondence as I judged it proper and advisable to publish to be sent to you.

The question was, the "War" in China. This covers the whole ground. It moreover is specially quoted by you as an act, participation in which was innocent. You will infer, from my replies, that the Bishop of OXFORD takes different grounds from yours.

He did not say that it was not a guilty act, nor did he on this occasion repudiate his former definition of it in the House of Lords as belonging to the nature of wolves and not of men, and as being productive in its consequences for this country of a lawlessness and ferocity incompatible with the existence of human society, and, moreover, that it must close China to the Gospel. I quote of course from recollection, but I will have the passages sought out and copied, to save you the trouble of reference. His justification was, that it was "God's act," and "opened China" to Protestant proselytism. Hethereon established the proposition that the sin of the act was redeemed by contributing money to send out missionaries to convert the Chinese. This appeared to me to contain a heresy equivalent to the denial of repentance as the conditions of pardon and absolution. I consequently determined to bring the matter to issue before the fitting tribunal, however hopeless might be the endeavour; seeing that such authorities as the Church of England does possess are in intimate association with the Government of this particular country, and are in no ways disassociated from those mental habits of the public mind which had rendered practicable the act in China, and similar ones elsewhere. I had to look not to the issue, but to my own duties.

My first step was to submit the letter containing these propositions (it is not given in the printed correspondence) for legal opinion. That opinion was, that the case would be met by a preliminary objection, as the letter would be held to belong to the category of "Privileged communications," and consequently that it was necessary to the institution of proceedings that the Bishop of OXFORD should co-operate with me to that end, by the removal of the restriction. This the Bishop refused to do.

In your case there is this difference: that you have not marked your letter "Private," and that you have published it—for a letter communicated is a letter published; but in publishing it you have caused the words "not published" to be inscribed on it.

I submit for your consideration whether it is not desirable for you to withdraw that limitation, seeing that your motives for it might be liable to misconstruction. The reasons you assign for rejecting my request I also venture to beg of you to reconsider.

The first is, that your letter is "incomplete." It is such as you judged fit to write it. Incomplete as it is, it has produced the effect you desired on those to whom you communicated it. It has so far stopped the signature of the Petition to the POPE by Roman Catholics. Lord DENBIGH has written to me to signify his approval of all your propositions, as step by step he has conveyed them to me. Yet his name is the first appended

to the Petition (the original Petition I mean, which goes over the whole case). I hear that Mr. —, too, has dropped the subject, having learnt from you that the Canon Law has nothing on the necessity of declaring a War to make it lawful. I understand from you that the Bishop of — agrees with you, and that, after having seen a letter from that Prelate entirely approving of the Petition, and expressing his desire that signatures should be obtained, and, at the same time, deploring the sanction given to public crimes. I think then that, on reflection, you will abandon the term “incomplete” as applied to your letter, and drop that argument against its publication.

Your second reason is that it appeals to, or consists of “authorities.” I do not see how in any way this can be an objection to publication. But admitting, for argument’s sake, that a letter on the conduct of States, with an application to the honour and conscience of each individual composing them, and involving in the judgments which it expresses the very basis of man’s reason and man’s faith, should not be published because it contains an authoritative exposition of the matter—admitting such a proposition—then I say it does not apply. The only authority quoted by you is that of Father ANTONIUS, and the passages so quoted, as shall be shown in my public letter to you, are not in your favour, but the contrary.

It may be that the anecdote you narrate of Cardinal WISEMAN may have been for a moment mistaken by you for an authority ; but reflection must suffice to remove the impression. I for my part must call on you for the “authority” on which the anecdote is given ; for against no man, far less so eminent a dignitary, could I admit, without the most unimpeachable evidence, the truth of such a statement. Even if satisfied of its truth, I would try, for the credit of humanity, to forget it, and failing to do so, for scandal’s sake I should never repeat it. Your reference to him is made the more unfortunate, as it appears to me, by this : that the recommendation which you declare that he gave to a young man to enter the army as a profession, although he had doubts whether the hostilities then being carried on against China were not criminal, is most clearly condemned by your own authority, the only authority you cite, and on which you rest your case. For what Father ANTONIUS says is this : that soldiers are not bound to examine into the justice of a War, “ *when no probable reason to the contrary presents itself, which should cause in their minds a positive doubt.*”

The reported decision amounted to this. That not only a man already in the army, and who had taken the military oath, ought to fight, although he had a serious doubt of the justice of the War, but that such serious doubt should not prevent any one

from voluntarily entering the service in which he might be required to become an assassin. For, observe, the origin of the War in question was notorious, and the object of it was not kept secret (which secrecy, had it existed, would itself have sufficed to render it unlawful, both according to the Canon Law and Law of Nations), but was avowed and proclaimed. It arose by hostilities on the spot undertaken against the Chinese by subordinates without authority, which the Government at home, instead of punishing as a gross violation of the Laws of England, approved of and prosecuted on its own account, and with the object of forcing upon the Chinese conditions which we had no right to require. Every condition required to make the *hostilities* lawful, either according to the Canon Law, the Law of Nations, or the Law of England, was wanting. It was on this occasion that Sir JAMES GRAHAM said in the House of Commons, "Without a Declaration of War any man who has taken the life of a Chinese is, *by statute*, guilty of murder." And the grounds on which you allege that the decision was given are still more in contradiction with the whole spirit as well as letter of the Canon Law. Namely, that in such a case, the guilt was that of those who had ordered the War only, and that a Christian man could *voluntarily* and *knowingly* become the executor of such guilt, without being himself thereby rendered guilty.

Your third reason for not publishing your letter is that it is not "argumentative." Here again I am at a loss to understand the logical sequence. If, as just before stated, your letter is authoritative, argument would be superfluous. The question at issue between us is simply one of authority. It is not one of abstract right, it is not one of natural Law, it is not one of deduction from the Law of Nations, it is not one even of Scriptural interpretation. All these, indeed, I have gone over, and they all coincide. But what you proposed to answer in your letter was not these, but the specific statements made by learned men, Catholics, the one an ecclesiastic, the other a lawyer, in reference to the Canons of the Church. These Canons they have quoted; against those quotations there could be no disproof that could be called argumentative; the only possible disproof consisted in establishing the falsification of the passages so cited. Therefore your letter could not have been argumentative, and consequently its publication, or non-publication, could not be affected by that condition.

I may here remark, that so far from establishing the falsification of the citations in question, you do not even allude to one of them. But you bring forward other quotations, not from the Canons or Catechism, but from a certain writer, which you declare to state with precision a doctrine the exact opposite of

mine—that is, of the Canons and Catechism as cited in the Answers to your first objections; for those writers made the quotations in question to show that your objections were unfounded, and that I was correct in what I had alleged to be the doctrine of the Catholic Church in these matters. If the quotations you make did bear the interpretation you put upon them, what you would have succeeded in showing would have been this—That the Catholic Church is in contradiction with itself, and that one authoritative decision is the exact opposite of another.

Lastly, you say that your letter is interwoven with allusions to private communications. If you thought fit to introduce those allusions in reference to a public matter, and as arguments for the non-signature of a Petition with reference to the Catechism, which had been approved of by the highest Ecclesiastical authority in England, the Archbishop of Westminster, and if you also thought fit to print and circulate that letter in order to maintain the erroneousness of that Petition, which of course involved impropriety in the act of your Ecclesiastical superior, it appears to me that by every motive which could influence human action, you had to present your case in the most formal and public manner, and had to court, not publicity only, but adjudication also.

That there may be no possible mistake or ambiguity in reference to the approval given by the Archbishop of Westminster to both the Petitions to the Holy Father, the one signed by Lord DENBIGH, and the shorter one, the signatures to which you have stopped, I subjoin his own words, transcribed from his own letters.

As regards the first Petition, he wrote, “I shall be happy, if you will, to present the document to the Holy Father.” As regards the second, he wrote, “I will talk with Cardinal —— about the Petition, the *matter of which is excellent*.”

I have now gone through the four reasons you give for not doing what you have already done—namely, for not publishing what you have published.

In the case of the Bishop of OXFORD, there was evidently bad faith; he had himself taken two opposite lines, denouncing the act when by a party move there was the expectation of its condemnation and reversal, sanctioning and approving of it when that expectation vanished. His object, therefore, in putting “Private and Confidential” on his letters, and throwing impediments in the way of publication, is explained.

In your case I can anticipate no such obstacles, and I therefore earnestly request of you to place your propositions in a form which will admit of an Ecclesiastical adjudication—that is to say, the statement of a proposition formally submitted in

your own name. I gather severally and conjointly from whatever proposition I have had of yours, whether from your reported words before and your printed letter now, that your theory of the theology of the Church of Rome is this, that *a man may commit a crime without being guilty of sin.*

That is, then, the proposition which has to be dealt with, and approved or condemned.

Another proposition might also be evolved from your Letter. It is this: *That, in the Catholic Church the practice of a certain number of Prelates and Priests constitutes an "authority" which has to be submitted to, and which may be legitimately pressed upon the individual conscience as such; and this not in respect to some new question not provided for by the Church in her Code of Laws, but in respect to one upon which definitive decisions have been pronounced, cases provided for, and rules laid down.*

The World, as distinguished from the Church, is now undergoing a process of decay and disintegration from having lost the knowledge that Law is of Divine origin, and therefore, not having its source in man, it cannot be changed by man. The functions of Government have been changed from the application of the Law to special cases, and the enforcement of its provisions, to the making of what they call laws, laying it down as a maxim that "freedom" for a people consists in its "being governed by the laws which itself has made," and that these laws, being political, have nothing to do with religion. The Church of Rome is opposed to the World on this very ground. It declares itself to be a recipient of Divine Law, and an expounder of it, but not its source; and upholds that Law to be unchangeable, and, moreover, necessary to prevent human society from falling into ruin. I need only quote the words of the present POPE, those words of his which I have chosen as the motto to my "Appeal" to him, and on which that Appeal is grounded.

"This Council is necessary to put in order the affairs of the world, which is falling to pieces because it has forgotten that the Divine Law is the foundation on which rests human society."

This position ceases to be hers from the moment that it can be admitted that anything said or done by individual members of her body can be adduced as against her own decisions. On these grounds I should be very glad to be relieved from having to reply to that large part of your Letter which consists of references to the conduct hitherto pursued by individual men. This would be accomplished by your consenting to place the question upon the grounds of what is and what is not the

authoritative (canonical) decisions respecting War, as applied both to rulers and subjects.

To my request for a list of the persons to whom you have sent your letter to Lord DENBIGH, that I might transmit to them copies of my reply to it, you answer by offering to send it yourself.

I accept that offer, but nevertheless repeat my request for the list of names, as I am naturally anxious to know who, in the Roman Catholic Body, are interested in a matter to open which with any one of my fellow-countrymen and contemporaries has always involved so great an amount of afflicting toil.

For the same reason I beg of you to inform me in what "foreign publication," letters of yours have been, as you say "very severely censured," being quite in ignorance of such a thing having occurred, and desiring much to see whatever has been written on these subjects.

The picture which this correspondence presents cannot fail to strike. It is that of an individual, not a member of the Roman Catholic Community, endeavouring to vindicate the honour of that Church, and to prompt it to raise itself to the assertion of supreme jurisdiction over the minds and the consciences of men; and that of a Priest of that Church, denying to it these qualities, and seeking by maxim to establish that it is only fit to be the subservient instrument of the most tyrannical of secular Governments, even in regard to the conception and execution of the basest of crimes.

Yet I, for my part, feel bound to you in a heavy debt of gratitude; for you have put words upon what all men do. So that what, being done by each was consented to by all so long as unspoken, has, being expressed in words, already moved in some, and may hereafter move in more, that just and profitable indignation which is the last resource of falling communities.

But beyond this there is a possible effect which might almost be termed Providential in respect to the forthcoming Council; from this: that a Priest, with large experience in the Confessional, has, in respect to the immediate duties connected with this most serious of all considerations in the care of Souls, brought the matter to issue on the grounds of a right in the impenitent to Absolution. So that that prospective august Assembly will not be able to avoid the consideration of the application of the old Canons of the Church to the new phase of public morals, and will be placed in the necessity of either proclaiming the old Laws against the aberrations of our times, or of accepting these aberrations as the new doctrines of the Church.

It is you, Sir, and not I, who have raised this question of

Absolution. I had never mentioned the word, not even in private conversation, much less in anything I have written or published. I had carefully avoided it, as being in itself too grave a matter to be spoken of, and also as one which it did not pertain to me to deal with. You have doubtless read my "Appeal to the Pope," and therefore know that in it the word is not mentioned. If you have not read my other writings on the same subject (twenty-five years ago I commenced my Appeals to the Catholic Church), any of my friends will be able to tell you whether or not I am correct on this point. I confined myself to asserting and showing that the Fifth Commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder," applied to nations as well as to individuals, and to individuals in respect to wholesale killing as well as to the killing of single persons. It was you who, for the purpose of stopping a Petition to the POPE for restoring to the Catechisms in common use the application of the Fifth Commandment to War, so that, "the consciences of the faithful being enlightened, they should no more lend a blind obedience to criminal orders—an obedience which plunges the nations periodically into War, and keeps them in continual alarms," asserted as a reason against signing such a Petition that such blind obedience could not be criminal, because if it were so, the necessary consequence would be that Absolution must be refused to soldiers, and this you hold to be an impossibility.

I, for my part, am not disposed to dispute this impossibility, seeing that the actual soldier has, I imagine, never been instructed as a child that the Fifth Commandment had anything to do with War, or that there was any contradiction between the oath to GOD given in baptism and the oath to man, which was to render him a blind instrument of man's most evil passions, and cause him to "imbrue his hands in innocent blood." I have indeed learnt from yourself that if a soldier should, notwithstanding his want of instruction on these points, come to entertain a doubt whether he is not about "to imbrue his hands in innocent blood, and thereupon apply to a Confessor, the duty of such Confessor is (which must mean to say that such has hitherto been the practice) to tell him "to dispel his doubts, to form his conscience, and to go to battle." To a soldier so instructed by his spiritual guides, how can they indeed refuse Absolution? Or rather, how can Absolution be needed for acts which, according to that doctrine, are not merely such as may be forgiven, but such as deserve praise?

You have, then, brought in the question of Absolution, not to throw light on the subject, but to obscure it. It is my business to replace it upon its right footing, which I have attempted to do by the appeal I make to you in this letter.

The difference between us appears to be this. That I desire this state of things to cease, and you desire it to continue. I use the word "appears;" for there are expressions in your letter which seem to imply that you approve of the endeavours that we, who are engaged in this work, have made. But, then, how is that you are not with us instead of being against us? Your act must be taken as the evidence of your intentions against any words, and to that I can attach no other meaning than this; that you do not desire that the ancient teachings on the Fifth Commandment with respect to War should be restored.

I have sought the aid of counsel before transmitting this Letter, and it has been observed to me in reply that the proposition which I have placed as yours is too general, and will be answered by you by the denial of its accuracy. I will, therefore, note the steps by which I conceive that proposition is arrived at by you.

The Catechism teaches that to kill in an unjust War is murder. You say that it is only the rulers who command the unjust War who are guilty of murder, and not the general, the officers, or soldiers by whom the killing is performed, and that this is so because they *cannot* be sure that the War is unjust, and that they *need* not inquire. You hold, that this being the normal condition of a soldier in the English army, a Christian man may enter that army without committing sin. Therefore you hold that a Christian man may *voluntarily* bind himself by an oath to commit what is in itself a crime—murder—without being guilty of sin.

I select the word "voluntarily," and underline it for this reason. Every one knows that the soldier in England enters the army of his own choice, and adopts it as a profession just as other men do the Church or the Law, the common soldier doing so as a means of earning his bread, and that the soldier on the Continent is taken by force, being held under the penalty of death to present himself for the conscription, and under the same penalty to join the army when he draws the lot which constitutes him a conscript. This major distinction between soldiers in England and on the Continent, was also specially insisted on by the writers in the *Diplomatic Review*. You, nevertheless, in your reply, not only avoid all notice of the distinction, but cover it over from your readers by coupling together, in reference to a "refusal of the sacraments," "the soldiers of our own *and foreign countries*."

At the moment of concluding this letter, I have received one from the French Ecclesiastic, the author of the reply to your objections, in which is contained a suggestion, which he re-

quests me to make to you, analogous to the one which this letter contains. I therefore transcribe it in his own words, and in doing so, I add the whole of the passage which bears upon yourself in order that you may judge of the spirit in which it is written, expressing at the same time the fervent hope that he will prove right in his expectations.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your very humble and faithful servant,

The Rev. R. Suffield.

D. URQUHART.

P.S.—I have added to the extracts one of a former date, which contains a commentary on Father ANTONIUS. I do so because I propose to have this letter printed at once with the enclosures, I am anxious to communicate my present letter to several persons, and desire to be saved copying. I observe that you intend my first private note and your reply to be so used; they will therefore be printed together.

I feel that I ought to add that I cannot concur with the writer in his attributing the evils of our times to the World having abandoned the Church, holding as I do the power of the Church to be supreme in the sense of preventing evil, and therefore attributing as I do whatever evil exists on the earth to the neglect by the Church of its own faculties and means. Without tracing back the historical events to the time when the Church was visibly supreme, my meaning will be apprehended when I say that the World to-day would be a different world to what it is had there existed in these latter days a St. JEROME, a St. AMBROSE, a St. FRANÇOIS DE SALES, a LAS CASAS, or a St. JEANNE DE CHANTAL to prompt a husband or a father at the peril of life to refuse to obey an unlawful order.

ENCLOSURES.

EXTRACTS FROM FRENCH LETTERS.

No. 1.

21 Juin, 1869.

Votre lettre m'arrive avec la brochure anglaise. Mais il m'est impossible de travailler sur cette donnée. La brochure est pour moi un livre scellé, parce qu'elle est écrit dans votre langue. Vos éclaircissements sont précieux. Mais je me sens mal à l'aise pour répondre à une brochure que je ne comprends pas.

Les textes latins du P. ANTOINE ne me paraissent pas reprochables. C'est ce qu'on trouve dans tous les canonistes. Tout dépend de l'usage qu'en fait celui qui les cite. Ainsi pour exemple, le No. 3 de la page 10 a l'air de signifier que les soldats ne sont pas tenus d'examiner la justice de la guerre; mais la

seconde partie de la phrase même dans laquelle cette pensée se trouve exprimée, montre que le sens n'est nullement celui de l'indifférence et de l'ignorance affecté en matière de guerre. L'auteur en effet ajoute immédiatement : *Quamdiu nulla probabilis ratio in contrarium occurrit, quæ ipsis dubium positivum afferat*. En vérité, il y aurait contradiction, si l'on entendait l'auteur comme je viens de dire. Pour saisir le vrai sens du Père ANTOINE, il faut un exemple. Ainsi je suppose qu'une guerre soit déclarée, dénoncés dans toutes les formes, après avis de canonistes et de théologiens. Les soldats ont entendu nécessairement parler de cette guerre. Conformément au texte de l'ancien testament : "Si jamais tu fais la guerre contre une cité, "tu lui offriras d'abord la paix," et aux prescriptions du Droit des Gens, la cause de la Guerre a été publiée. Tout est en règle, tout s'est fait selon la légalité ; les soldats connaissent en outre la cause de la guerre. À ce moment *aucune raison sérieuse ne s'offre à leur esprit contre la valeur de cette cause. Nulla probabilis ratio in contrarium occurrit. Aucune doute sérieuse* se produit dans leurs intelligences : *quæ ipsis dubium positivum afferat*.

Dans cette situation, sont-ils tenus de procéder à un examen de la juste cause de la guerre à laquelle ils sont appelés ? Non, dit le P. ANTOINE, et tout homme de sens répondra comme lui. Les soldats placés dans ces circonstances, n'ayant pas de preuves ou d'indices sérieux, ni que le chef de leur gouvernement fait la guerre par passion, ni que ses conseillers laïques et ecclésiastiques sont des hommes vendus, sans principes, sans foi ni loi, n'ayant pas de raison sérieuse de croire que tout ne s'est pas passé convenablement, et trouvant d'ailleurs suffisante à première vue la cause de guerre qui a été publiée, ces soldats, dis-je, ne sont pas tenus alors, chacun en particulier, de faire ce qu'a fait le chef du gouvernement, c'est-à-dire, un examen en règle du *casus belli*.

Voilà le cas correspondant à l'assertion du P. ANTOINE. Je ne vois pas en quoi il heurte les doctrines professées dans la *Revue Diplomatique*.

Le titre de la brochure anglaise, "Le droit des soldats à l'absolution," me fait croire à lui seul que la question est déplacée.

Je crois que l'essentiel, actuellement, est de rétablir la question dans ses vrais termes.

No. 2.

30 Juin.

D'après ce que j'entend dire et que je devine du Père SUFFIELD, il y a malentendu, et pas autre chose, entre lui et nous. Contentons-nous de soutenir, *que les hommes éclairés, qui sachant*

qu'en général les guerres se font aujourd'hui injustement, contre les principes de la Loi Divine et naturelle, prétendraient néanmoins rester dans l'ignorance crasse et affectée et s'enrôler dans l'armée n'importe pour quelle guerre, n'auraient pas droit à l'absolution.

Cela nous suffit. Or pour toute réponse au Père SUFFIELD, le mieux peut être serait de lui envoyer la proposition que je viens de souligner, et de lui demander s'il voudrait la noter théologiquement, et de quelle censure il la stigmatiserait. Cela lui ouvrirait les yeux ; ou bien lui ferait voir le vrai point de la question.

P.S. to the same letter.

Je me suis fait traduire la brochure du Père SUFFIELD par un maître d'anglais. Elle m'est arrivée ce matin. Je l'ai déjà parcouru deux fois, mais rapidement. Il serait très utile d'y répondre, mais avec mesure. Le Père SUFFIELD n'est pas au fond en désaccord avec nous. Comme je l'ai déjà dit la première fois, il est seulement utile de s'expliquer avec lui, et il viendra.

Dites bien, dans votre réponse, que ce n'est pas l'église, ni son enseignement de vérité qui manque au monde ; c'est le monde qui manque à l'église depuis longtemps, parce qu'il ne veut plus l'écouter.

Et le mouvement qui se fait aujourd'hui et dans lequel entrent des Protestants, le mouvement dont vous êtes en particulier l'auteur par votre Appel, est providentiel, en ce que le pape est reconnu comme Docteur, et qu'on réclame son enseignement.

Le monde n'a plus voulu de l'église, il a voulu tout lui ôter, la rendre ou muette ou incompétente sur l'éducation de la jeunesse, sur le Droit civil et politique, sur le Droit des Gens et la guerre, sur toutes choses. Le monde a dit au pape, "Je ne veux plus t'écouter." Aujourd'hui le pape d'une part—parce que le monde est à bout, et qu'il est temps,—proclame courageusement les vérités religieuses. Et d'un autre côté beaucoup d'hommes lui disent : "Parlez, enseignez, nous vous écouterons."

Voilà ce qu'il faut faire entendre au Père SUFFIELD, sans incriminer sa conduite ni celle des autres au confessionnal.

No. IV.

THE REV. R. SUFFIELD TO D. URQUHART, ESQ.

The Hermitage, H. Bosworth, Leicestershire,
July 12, 1869.

DEAR SIR,—At first I declined your request that I should publish my letter to Lord DENBIGH. Many paragraphs allude to statements and assertions in private letters from different

persons: and my letter presupposes a knowledge of previous communications with these parties, in course of which nearly all authorities, from St. AUGUSTIN down to BALLERINI, passed under review. My letter as it stands makes no allusion to any of these, and merely adduces the teaching of a theologian of the second class, characterised by BALLERINI as "*Auctor valde rigidæ sententiæ.*" It was a letter simply to invite criticism, and to elicit distinct and public statements from those who have at present concealed their names: thus copies, as many as at first desired, were placed in the hands of the publisher of the *Diplomatic Review* to circulate amongst those who most objected to my opinions on the subject.

The receipt of your second letter decides me to recal my refusal, my reluctance to publish so incomplete and meagre a production must yield to the stronger expression of your wish: the intense and life-long earnestness with which you throw yourself into a series of questions worthy of your genius and of your charity, must claim from every Catholic more than the sacrifice of his private inclinations.

Besides, I agree with you that my letter printed along with yours will provide texts on which to found conveniently the arguments by which you will oppose.

I am surprised that the ecclesiastics who communicate to you privately have neglected drawing your attention to an error which ought not to have escaped any priest, namely, that I do not speak of absolution as applying to the act of a sworn soldier serving without historic investigation. But every soldier before entering on an engagement ought to approach the sacraments; he will have been guilty of some mortal or venial sins, and for these, if penitent, he demands absolution. Disciples of yours have declared that such a soldier is unable to be absolved from these sins, because he is already contemplating the commission of a greater sin, and that the confessor is bound under pain of mortal sin to instruct him that such service is a mortal sin.

You will also please to notice that on some questions in my letter I merely ask questions, without expressing an opinion. As yet I have only expressed my opinion on the position of soldiers already sworn.

I shall feel obliged by your printing this note along with my letter.

My letter has been sent to all the English Catholic bishops, and to some of the Irish and Scotch Bishops, and to several of the Catholic Peers and Members of Parliament. If you will send your reply to these, I shall be glad to send it to other persons affected by the question, but whose names I should not feel at liberty to bring forward.

The answers I have received from Bishops and from other Christians confirms me in my position.

Should your arguments elicit from them an opposite decision, I shall be the first one to submit.

Should the Holy See decree as you hope, the whole subject will to every Catholic pass out of the range of argument or of uncertainty.

I have written to my friend abroad to inquire the name of the foreign publication which he informed me has criticised severely my opinions on this subject.

I have written to my friend who was permitted to enter the army at the time of the Chinese war to ask him to have the kindness to give the statement with his name. You shall hear the result of both these communications.

I have the honour to remain, dear Sir,

Your faithful servant,

F. R. RUDOLPH SUFFIELD, O.S.D.

Permit me to call your attention to page 88 of the *Rosary Magazine*; you will perceive that at my recommendation very many thousands of persons in an association I founded in England are praying for several of the objects of your heart's desire.

David Urquhart, Esq.

No. V.

D. URQUHART, ESQ., TO THE REV. R. SUFFIELD.

St. Gervais, 18th July, 1869.

DEAR SIR,—I cannot allow this correspondence to close without mentioning that no Ecclesiastic had an opportunity of correcting me if I am wrong on the point of absolution; none having seen my last letter to yourself.

The point, however, as brought forward by me is not, in my opinion, touched by your observations, as I shall show in my public answer to your letter to Lord DENBIGH—if, indeed, that letter is ever completed—for already has such an amount of approximation taken place that I am not without the hope that our intercourse may hereafter be one of co-operation and not controversy. I am the more inclined to indulge in this expectation, as I have received a reply to your letter by a learned Ecclesiastic, which, surpassing anything that it could have been in my power to say, will, I trust (coming from such a source), not be without its weight with you.

I gather, indeed, both from what your present letter does not contain—namely, any reference to the propositions which I had

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drawn from your former one — and from certain expressions which it does contain, that your present position is that rather of an inquirer than a controversialist.

Still there are incidental points which I shall have to enter into, and which need in no way involve personal opposition; such as your having confounded the forced payment of taxes with the voluntary entrance into the army. Above all does it behove me to put before you your wonderful misapprehension when you say that in such case—the case I suppose—the sacraments could be administered only to “Quakers and to Mr. URQUHART.” I will not even wait for my letter to tell you that my conflict has been with those who desire peace for peace’s sake, no less than with those who desire war for war’s sake. Whilst the Quakers are on one side and I on the other, it is you who are on the Quaker’s side. Essentially your position is the same, the difference is in accidents only. You, as they, exclude the matter of justice in the consideration of War.

Losing this the foundation of all, there is no difference between those who condemn the man who attempts to defend himself being unjustly attacked, or—more important still—who resists wrong, and you who justify the man who assaults his innocent fellow-creature. Each of you have converted the matter into a generality, with the necessary consequences attaching to such—that of living thereafter out of yourselves and in a proposition.

I also shall take the opportunity of explaining how I have become an admirer of the Church of Rome through the study of the Canon Law, from being its bitter and, as I now know, its fanatical enemy.

I return Cardinal WISEMAN and Mr. DE BARY’s letters, which, as you desire, shall be printed with the rest, and also in the other manner that you indicate, to meet the suspicion you refer to of having spoken without grounds. I do not offer you any excuse for what I said, as my words certainly proceeded from no doubts as to your veracity, but because of the incredible nature of the statement. I will, however, remark that Cardinal WISEMAN gives no reason for the opinion he offers for the guidance of a conscience applying to him in so grave a matter, and that his words, beyond the sense they convey, carry a reproof for any one who dared so much as to entertain a scruple.

The point of the letter lies in the words, “your own private opinion.” This as to conduct, not belief. It is now beyond doubt that Cardinal WISEMAN has laid it down on the very gravest and highest matter, that a Catholic is to have no private opinion in regard to what he does himself and what the secular authority does. But as Dr. WISEMAN was a Cardinal, but not

the Catholic Church, I submit that the incident tells most conclusively on my side, and against the theses sustained in the letter, in which you have approvingly quoted him. I mean that conscience shall not be quieted by the Ecclesiastical authority of men, speaking in ignorance or disregard of the Canon Law, but that conscience shall be quickened so as to stop the evil, by the instruction of pastors and confessors in that law.

That such words should have been spoken by a learned Doctor, and a functioning Archbishop, should have been received with docile and passive submission, and be recalled from oblivion after the lapse of so many years as an authoritative exposition of doctrine (for if you did not intend it to carry weight why did you quote it), does prove, if anything could prove, that a General Council is necessary to save the Catholic community as well as human society.

The historical character that belongs to General Councils is that of recalling Ecclesiastics to the study of the Canon Law, which, in its application to War, is no other than natural right and the Law of Nations, except indeed, as might be expected, that it goes much further.

I had already received the *Rosary Magazine*, and had read with no less gratification than astonishment the passage on the General Council invoking the re-declaration of the natural law between nations, the abolition of standing armies, and the institution of due means of ecclesiastical adjudication.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your obedient and faithful servant,

DAVID URQUHART.

The Rev. R. B. Suffield.

ENCLOSURES.

CARDINAL WISEMAN AND MR. DE BARY.

MR. R. L. DE BARY TO THE REV. R. SUFFIELD.

Weston Hall, Rugby, July 13, 1869.

REV. AND DEAR FATHER,—In compliance with your request I hasten to relate the fact which you refer to in your letter to Lord DENBIGH of June 7, 1869, with this premised, that it was not I who wrote to Cardinal WISEMAN, but my father.

The late Chinese War having broken out when I was on the point of entering the army, my father became uneasy, because, as he considered the War unjust, he did not know whether he should be doing right in letting me enter.

He therefore consulted the Cardinal, whose answer I have

been lucky enough to find, and which I enclose. I may add, that my father ceased to be troubled about the matter.

I remain, Rev. and dear Father,

Yours with great respect,

R. L. DE BARY.

To Father Rudolph Sufield.

CARDINAL WISEMAN TO MR. DE BARY.

Talacre, Rhyl, Aug. 7, 1857.

DEAR SIR,—I do not see that you have anything to do with your private opinion about the justice of a particular War, in deciding your son's going into the army. You may freely let him obtain his commission as soon as possible.

Yours very sincerely in CHRIST,

N. CARDINAL WISEMAN.

THE END.

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